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DOCUMENT RESUME

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Reorganization of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Western Test Range at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California]. RPOD-77-65; B-133394. July 22, 1977. 2 pp.

Report to Rep. Robert J. Lagomarsino; by H. L. Krieger, Director, Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

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Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

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Organization Concerned: National Aeronautics and Space Administration: Western Test Range, Vandenberg AFB, CA.

Congressional relevance: Rep. Robert J. Lagomarsino.

In view of limited activity at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Western Test Range, NASA began in February 1977 to reduce the contractor's staff. During launch operations, the remaining staff will be augmented with a mobile team from the Eastern Test Range. Findings/Conclusions: The bases for NASA's savings that are estimated to result from the organization were found to be reasonable. By reducing the contract staff from 63 to 21 employees and civil service staff from 23 to 13 employees, NASA projected savings of \$859,000 in fiscal year 1977, \$1,635,000 in fiscal year 1978, \$2,270,000 in fiscal year 1979, and \$2,286,000 in fiscal year 1980. (DJM)



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND COMPENSATION DIVISION

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The Honorable Robert J. Lagomarsino
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Lagomarsino:

In your May 17, 1977, letter you requested that we review the planned reorganization of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Western Test Range (WTR) facility at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. The correspondence forwarded to us by your letter indicated that

- the proposed reorganization may not benefit operations,
- the reorganization may not be cost effective; and
- Civil Service Commission Regulations are not being consistently applied during the Reduction-in-Force (RIF).

We examined records, discussed these matters with NASA Headquarters officials, and reviewed Civil Service Commission regulations.

NASA plans a phase down of Delta Space vehicles with ultimate replacement by the space shuttle during 1980. Current plans call for a heavy launch rate for Kennedy Space Flight Center at Eastern Test Range (ETR) through 1980 and only 2 Delta launches (in 1978) at WTR between now and 1981. At that time the space shuttle is scheduled for a renewed WTR program with 4 to 5 WTR launches the first year.

In view of the limited activity at WTR, NASA began in February 1977 to reduce the staff of the contractor, McDonnell Douglas Astronautics Company, to a caretaker crew and plans to augment them with a mobile team from ETR during launch operations. The mobile team concept is not new to NASA. Such teams have proven successful in two other NASA launch programs.

When WTR launch activities pick up in 1981 the mobile team will be transferred to WTR and if necessary will augment ETR launches.

Since the major role of the resident civil service staff at WTR is the management and support of the Delta launch vehicle contractor, a corresponding reduction in staffing was determined to be both economically necessary and operationally feasible.

We found the bases for NASA's savings estimated to result from the reorganization to be reasonable. Reducing the contract staff from 63 to 21 employees with a corresponding reduction in the civil service staff, from 23 to 13 employees, NASA projects the following savings:

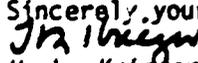
| | <u>FY-77</u> | <u>FY-78</u> | <u>FY-79</u> | <u>FY-80</u> |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Civil Service | -0- | \$ 219,000 | \$ 254,000 | \$ 220,000 |
| Contract | <u>\$259,000</u> | <u>1,465,000</u> | <u>2,006,000</u> | <u>2,006,000</u> |
| | <u>\$259,000</u> | <u>\$1,625,000</u> | <u>\$2,270,000</u> | <u>\$2,226,000</u> |

In its estimates NASA has allowed for special costs associated with the reorganization and subsequent operations.

During a Reduction-in-Force (RIF) agencies are bound by CSC regulations. We found no inconsistency in the application of these regulations.

Specifically, in preparation of the RIF, your correspondent, Mrs. Evelyn R. Ellis, Secretary (GS-6) WTR, was offered a lateral transfer to the ETR, which she refused. The June 21, 1977 RIF notice offered her a position with reduction in grade (GS-5) at WTR. Despite saved pay provisions, Mrs. Ellis opted for discounted service, with retirement effective July 20, 1977. At this time we are not aware of any grievances being filed, nor any appeals of the RIF action. However, appeals can be filed as late as 15 days after the effective date.

We trust this information is satisfactory to your needs.

Sincerely yours,

 H. L. Krieger
 Director